

PHILIP JOSÉ FARMER'S

# THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST



GRISLY '73

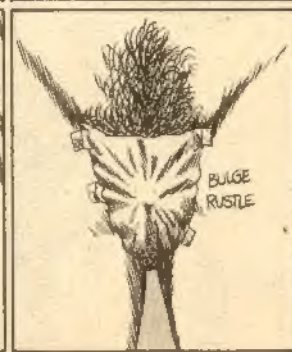
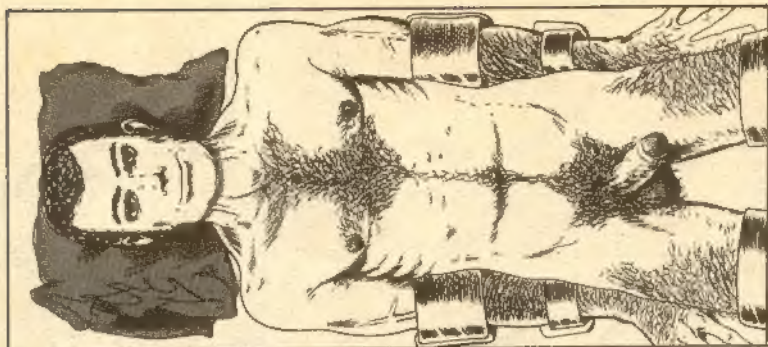


# CHAPTER ONE

GREEN MILK CURDLED. SMOG WAS OUTSIDE AND SMOG WAS INSIDE. THE FILM ROOM OF THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT WAS DARKER THAN HERALD CHILDE HAD EVER SEEN IT. THE BEAM OF LIGHT FROM THE PROJECTION BOOTH USUALLY TENDED TO MAKE GRAY WHAT OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN BLACK. BUT THE CIGAR AND CIGARETTE SMOKE, THE SMOG AND THE MOOD OF THE VIEWERS BLACKENED EVERYTHING. THE WORST SMOG IN HISTORY WAS SMOTHERING LOS ANGELES AND ORANGE COUNTIES. NOT A MOUSE OF WIND HAD STIRRED FOR A DAY AND A NIGHT AND A DAY AND A NIGHT. BUT NOW HE COULD FORGET THE SMOG...







WHAT THE  
HELL  
WAS THAT?





AS THE WOMAN'S LIPS  
MOVED IN AN ENERGETIC  
MASSAGE...



A TINNY PIANO, LIKE THOSE  
IN OLD TIME BARS OR MOVIE  
THEATERS, BEGAN DYORAKS  
HUMORESQUE.



TELL ME BEFORE YOU'RE  
READY TO COME, DARLING.  
I HAVE A SUPRIZE FOR YOU,  
SOMETHING... NEW!



GO SLOWER BABY...  
TAKE IT EASY, LIKE YOU  
DID LAST TIME.





THE TUNE ON THE PIANO  
CHANGED TO THE  
WILLIAM TELL OVERTURE.

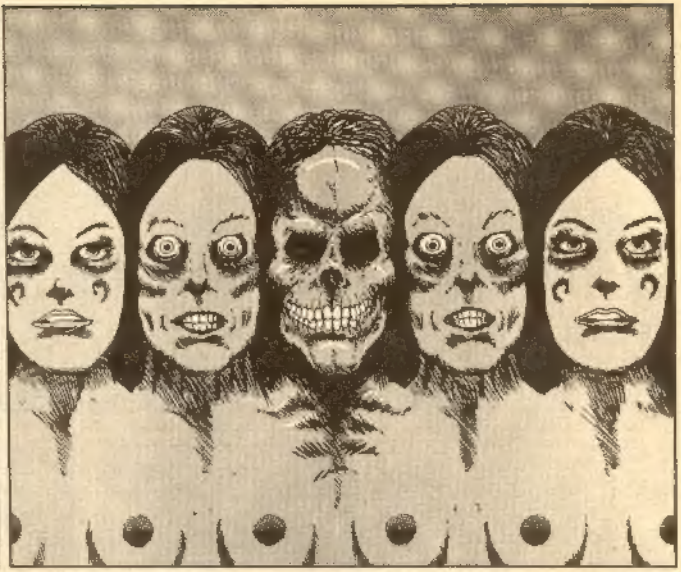


ARE YOU ABOUT  
READY TO COME  
MON PETIT?

THE TINNY MUSIC WAS SO  
INCONGRUOUS AND YET  
IT WAS THE INCONGRUITY  
THAT MADE IT SEEM SO  
HORRIBLE.



OH... JESUS  
JUST  
ABOUT!



THE WOMAN PUT HER HEAD  
DOWN AGAIN, BUT THIS TIME  
SHE SQUATTED NEAR ONE  
LEG OF THE TABLE...



AND REMOVED SOMETHING  
FROM A SHELF ON THE LEG-  
A PAIR OF IRON FALSE TEETH.



SHE USED BOTH HANDS  
TO REMOVE HER OWN TEETH.



AND REPLACED  
THEM WITH THE  
IRON SET.



SHE STOOD AGAIN  
AND LICKED HIM  
SLOWLY UNTIL...



OH GOD  
I'M GOING  
TO...







THERE WAS A FLOURISH  
OF TRUMPETS. A CANNON  
BOOMED IN THE DISTANCE.  
THE PIANO PLAYED THE  
1812 OVERTURE.

TRUMPETS SOUNDED  
AGAIN AS THE MUSIC  
FADED.



THE FIRST TIME HE  
SAW THE FILM, HE  
FAINTED.



THIS TIME HE GOT UP  
AND RAN TOWARD THE  
DOOR, BUT VOMITED  
BEFORE HE MADE IT.



HE WAS NOT ALONE.



CHILDE SPENT TIME IN THE WASH-ROOM CLEANING UP AND TRYING TO REGAIN HIS COMPOSURE. HE MET THE COMMISSIONER IN THE HALL.



WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A CONFERENCE YOU CAN SIT IN ON IT, CONTRIBUTE IF YOU WISH...

I'D LIKE TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE POLICE BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO CONTRIBUTE NOT NOW ANYWAY.

I'M SORRY WE CAN'T SPEND MORE TIME ON THIS CASE. EVERYTHING'S GONE TO HELL SINCE THIS SMOG SETTLED IN.



YES I KNOW THE DEPARTMENT WILL HAVE TO GET ON IT LATER. I'M GRATEFUL THAT YOU'VE TAKEN THIS MUCH TIME...

THE IMAGES OF THE FILM HAD BEEN BURNED INTO HIS MIND. COLBEN MUST BE DEAD. BUDLER, THE MAN THEY HAD BEEN HIRED TO FIND WAS STILL MISSING AND BUDLER'S WIFE HAD DECIDED AGAINST PAYING FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION.



AND THE SMOG WAITED OUTSIDE.

IT WAS LIKE WALKING AT THE BOTTOM OF A SEA OF VERY THIN BILE. EYES BURNED LIKE HERETICS AT THE STAKE. SINUSES WERE SCOURGED. THE AIR HAD BEEN UNMOVING FOR A DAY AND A NIGHT AND A HALF A DAY AS IF THE ATMOSPHERE HAD DIED AND WAS ROTTING.



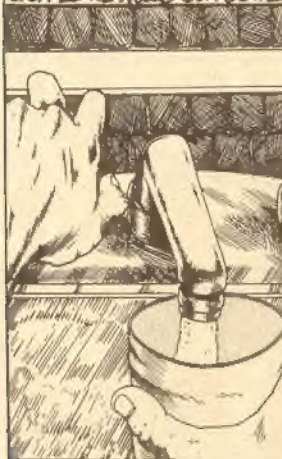
CHILDE INTENDED TO FIND OUT ALL HE COULD, THOUGH HE SUSPECTED THAT HE WOULD FIND OUT VERY LITTLE. HE DID NOT INTEND TO SIT STILL AND BREATHE POISON GAS.



GODDAM SMOG!

SLAM

HE WAS LIKE A SHARK THAT HAD TO KEEP MOVING TO ALLOW WATER TO FLOW THROUGH THE GILLS. ONCE HE STOPPED HE WOULD SUFFOCATE.



BUT A SHARK CAN BREATHE AND ALSO STAND STILL IF THE WATER IS MOVING. SYBIL COULD BE HIS FLOWINGNESS. SYBIL WAS A NAME THAT...



SOUNDED LIKE RUNNING BROOKS AND SUNSHINE IN QUIET GREEN GLADES AND WISDOM FROM FULL FLOWING BREASTS. CERTAINLY NOT GREEN MILK. WHITE CREAMY MILK OF TENDERNESS AND GOOD SENSE.



THE ONLY WOMAN TO WHOM HE COULD REALLY UNBURDEN HIMSELF AND FEEL RELAXED AND CERTAIN OF COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING. BUT IT WAS ALL A LIE. IF SHE HAD UNDERSTOOD SHE WOULD NOT NOW BE HIS EX-WIFE.



NO ANSWER!



SYBIL'S PHONE REMAINED UNANSWERED. CHILDE WENT TO BED. HIS SLEEP WAS SHATTERED THE NEXT MORNING BY THE PHONE. IT WAS SGT. BRUIN...

CHILDE?

YES...

THEY MEAN BUSINESS! THAT FILM WASN'T FAKED.

HOW'D YOU FIND OUT?

WE JUST OPENED A PACKAGE FROM PASADENA. COLBEN'S PRICK WAS IN IT. SOMEONE'S ANYWAY. IT SURE AS HELL HAD BEEN BITTEN OFF.

I GOT MORE BAD NEWS WE HAVE TO DROP THE CASE ENTIRELY FOR A WHILE YOU KNOW WHY. IF THERE'S ANY WORK TO BE DONE ON THIS YOU'LL HAVE TO DO IT. GOOD LUCK, CHILDE!

SAME TO YOU, BRUIN.

THERE WERE NO CLUES OR LEADS EXCEPT THE VAMPIRE MOTIF WHICH WAS NOTHING BUT A SUGGESTION OF A DIRECTION TO TAKE. THERE WAS ONE MAN HE KNEW WHO WAS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN THE OCCULT.

A CALL TO JEREMIAH ELICITED THE PROMISE OF A FOLDER FULL OF INFORMATION ON VAMPIRES, SUPERNATURAL AND THE LIKE.

CHILDE WENT OUT TO PICK UP FOOD AND TO TRY AND FIND ANOTHER GAS MASK. HE RETURNED TO FIND THE FOLDER STUFFED IN HIS MAILBOX. AN HOUR LATER...

THERE MUST BE A DOZEN CLIPPINGS HERE ABOUT TROLLING HOUSE AND "BARON IGESCU". THERE JUST MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO THEM.

THE CASE WAS NOW ALL HIS AND THE ONLY "LEADS" HE HAD WERE AN ECCENTRIC RICHMAN, WHO WAS RUMORED TO BE A VAMPIRE, AND HIS ESTATE, WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HAUNTED. IMPATIENCE MADE THE NEXT DECISION FOR HIM. THE ARTICLES GAVE THE LOCATION...

THERE'S NOTHING TO LINK IGESCU OR HIS ESTATE WITH COLBEN AND BUDLER, BUT I'VE GOT TO AT LEAST CHECK IT OUT.

THE DRIVE WAS PLEASANT AND BROUGHT HIM AT LAST TO A FORMIDABLE WALL. CHILDE GOT OUT, LOCKED HIS CAR AND WALKED TO THE GATE.

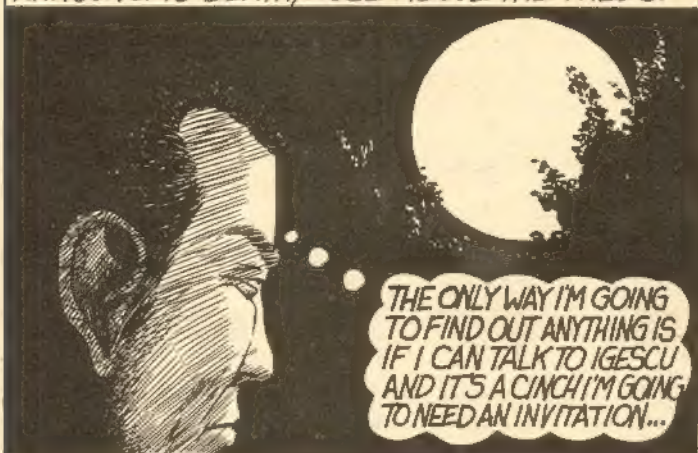
AN EXAMINATION OF THE PERIMETER OF THE ESTATE INSISTED THAT WITHOUT THE PROPER EQUIPMENT ENTRANCE WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.

SPIKES, BARB WIRE, WALLS MUST BE TEN FEET.

IGESCU SEEMS SINCERE ENOUGH ABOUT WANTING PRIVACY.



THE SUN HAD DISAPPEARED BY THE TIME CHILDE RETURNED TO HIS CAR. HE GOT IN AND SAT IN SILENCE AS THE ALMOST FULL MOON, EDGED IN BLACK LIKE A CARD ANNOUNCING DEATH, ROSE ABOVE THE TREES.



THE ONLY WAY I'M GOING TO FIND OUT ANYTHING IS IF I CAN TALK TO IGESCU AND IT'S A CINCH I'M GOING TO NEED AN INVITATION...

THEN OVER THE WALL CAME A SOUND THAT TURNED HIS SCALP COLD.



THE DRIVE HOME WAS UNEVENTFUL. WHEN HE REACHED HIS APARTMENT HE DISCOVERED THAT HE WAS VERY TIRED. THE POISONED AIR HAD BURNED AWAY HIS VITALITY. IT WAS LATE ENOUGH SO THAT MOLLY, HIS CONTACT AT THE PHONE COMPANY WOULD BE ON DUTY AND ABLE TO GIVE HIM IGESCU'S UNLISTED NUMBER.



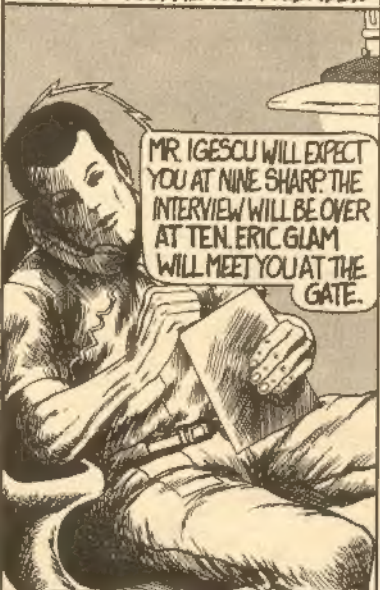
4...7...3...  
THANKS MOLLY!  
I'LL DROP OFF THE  
USUAL TO YOU IN  
THE MORNING.

HE DIALED IGESCU'S NUMBER AND WAITED. THE PHONE RANG AND THE VOICE THAT ANSWERED WAS LOW AND LOVELY. MAGDA HOLYANI WAS MR. IGESCU'S SECRETARY. SHE STRESSED THE "MISTER". CHILDE GAVE HER HIS STORY.



...ALL THE WAY FROM LONDON AND I'D REALLY BE GRATEFUL IF...

THERE WAS A PAUSE. CHILDE GUESSED THAT SHE WAS CONFERRING WITH HER EMPLOYER. WHEN SHE RETURNED TO THE PHONE HER MANNER WAS MORE RELAXED, ALMOST FRIENDLY.



MR. IGESCU WILL EXPECT YOU AT NINE SHARP. THE INTERVIEW WILL BE OVER AT TEN. ERIC GLAM WILL MEET YOU AT THE GATE.

IT SEEMED ALMOST TOO EASY. THE ARTICLES HAD DESCRIBED IGESCU AS A FANATIC FOR PRIVACY AND WHAT CHILDE HAD SEEN OF THE ESTATE CERTAINLY SEEMED TO SUPPORT THIS. BUT HE HAD GOTTEN THE INVITATION HE WANTED, WHATEVER IGESCU'S MOTIVES WERE, HE WOULD BE INSIDE THE ESTATE IN LESS THAN 24 HOURS.





# CHAPTER TWO

CHILDE AWOK AT ONE THE NEXT AFTERNOON. HE ATE A SANDWICH, WASHED IT DOWN WITH MILK AND PLANNED HIS ACTIVITIES. HE HAD EIGHT HOURS TO KILL BEFORE HE WOULD MAKE HIS APPEARANCE AS "HAROLD WELLSTON".

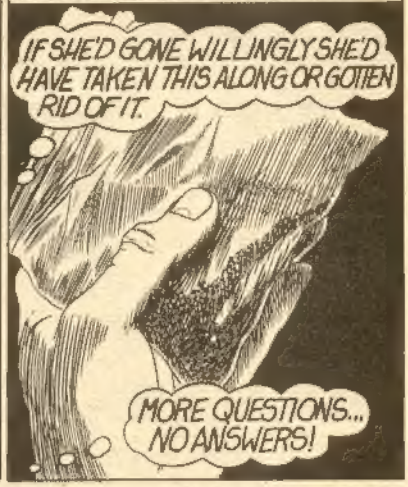


AGAIN HIS CALL RANG UNANSWERED AT SYBIL'S. IRRITATED HE DROVE THROUGH THE GREEN HAZE TO HER APARTMENT. THE DOOR WAS LOCKED AND THERE WAS NO RESPONSE TO THE BELL OR HIS KNOCK. HE PICKED THE LOCK AND WENT IN.



HER SUITCASES ARE GONE, BUT I SAW HER CAR IN THE GARAGE.

CHILDE WENT INTO THE BATHROOM AND FOUND HER STASH. STILL WHERE SHE KEPT IT HIDDEN.



IF SHE'D GONE WILLINGLY SHE'D HAVE TAKEN THIS ALONG OR GOTTEN RID OF IT.

MORE QUESTIONS... NO ANSWERS!

THE DAY HAD SEEMED ENDLESS, BUT NINE HAD COME AT LAST AND HE FOUND HIMSELF AT THE ESTATE. HE WAS GREETED AT THE GATE BY...



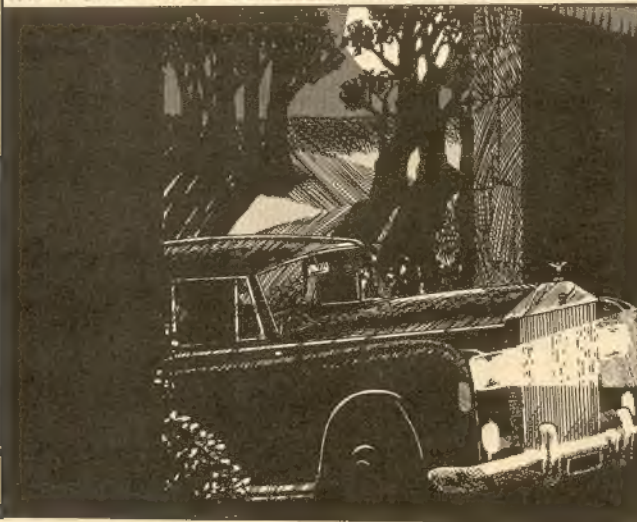
...ERIC GLAM. MAY I SEE YOUR I.D., SIR?



CHILDE PRODUCED SEVERAL CARDS A DRIVER'S LICENCE AND A LETTER, ALL COUNTERFEIT. THE CHAUFFEUR EXAMINED THEM AND THEN OPENED THE GATE.

THIS WAY SIR!

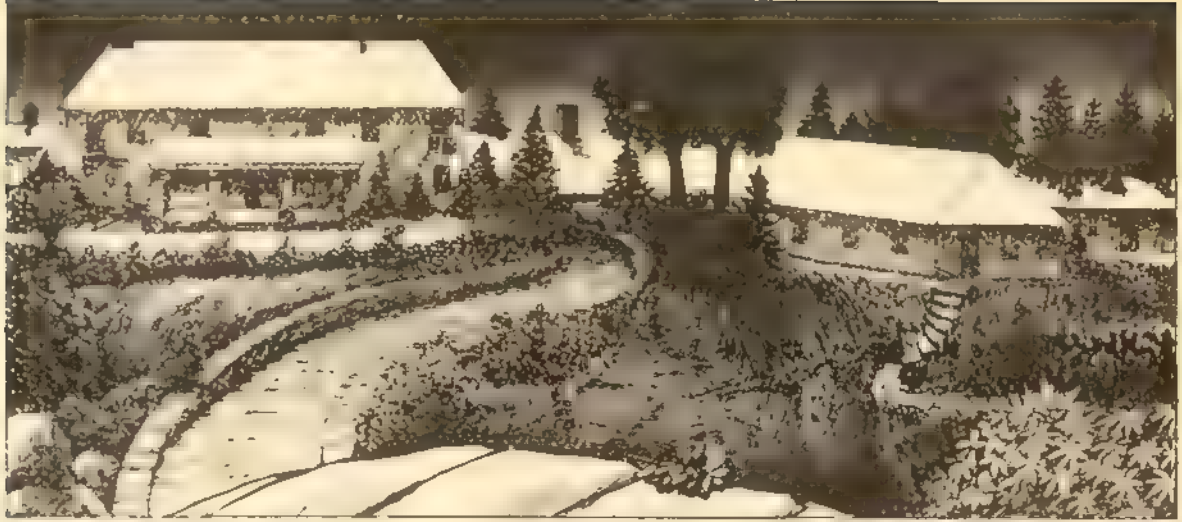
THE DRIVE TOOK THEM PAST ANOTHER WALL...



AND FOR AN INSTANT THE HEADLIGHTS CAUGHT FOUR GLEAMING EYES IN THE DARKNESS.

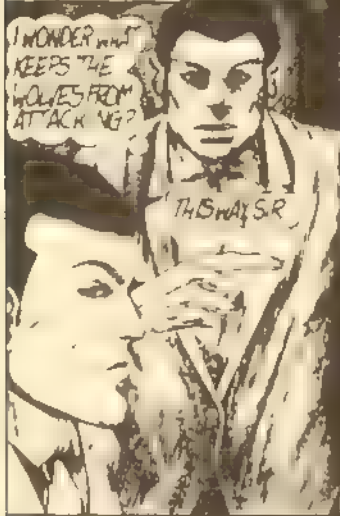






CHILDE STEPPED OUT OF THE CAR AND POISED

I WONDER WHAT  
KEEPS THE  
WOLVES FROM  
ATTACKING?



THAT WAY, SR

GLAM PRESSED A BUTTON AND A  
LIGHT OVER THE DOOR CAME ON



GLAM SEEMED  
A BIT INTO A  
MOST PECULIAR  
LOOK AND THE  
DOOR OPENED



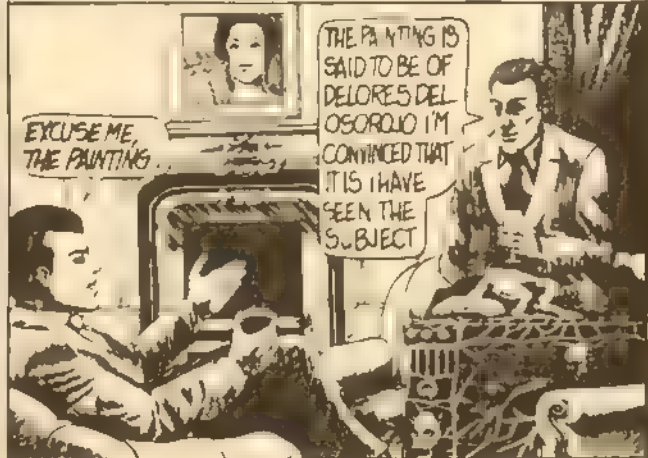
GOOD EVENING  
MR WELLSTON



I APPRECIATE YOUR  
TAKING THE TIME

ONE HOUR MISTER  
WELLSTON FOLLOW ME

IGESCU IMMEDIATELY TOOK CHILDE ON A GUIDED TOUR  
THIS LASTED FOR ABOUT FIVE MINUTES AND WAS CONFINED  
TO A FEW ROOMS ON THE FIRST FLOOR THEY RETURNED  
TO A LARGE ROOM OFF THE CENTRAL HALL WHERE  
IGESCU ASKED CHILDE TO SIT DOWN..



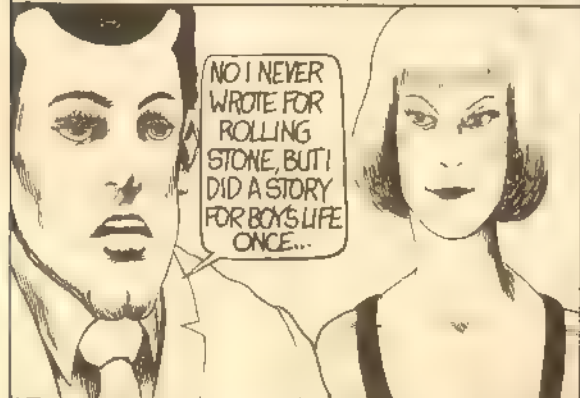
EXCUSE ME,  
THE PAINTING

THE PAINTING IS  
SAID TO BE OF  
DELORES DEL  
OSORIO I'M  
CONVINCED THAT  
IT IS I HAVE  
SEEN THE  
SUBJECT

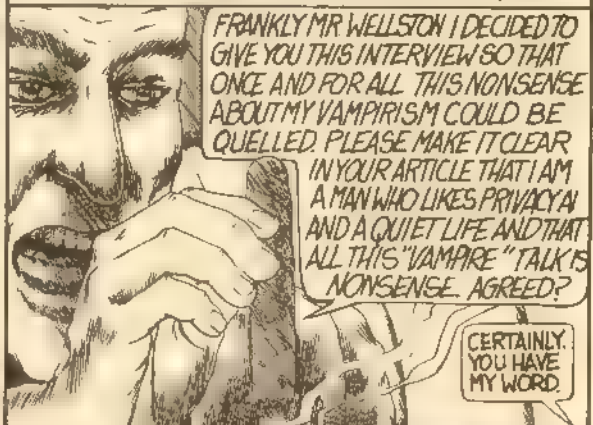




MAGDA TOOK OVER THE CONVERSATION FROM IGESCU. HER ANSWERS WERE BRIEF, UNSATISFACTORY AND ACCOMPANIED BY QUESTIONS OF HER OWN. CHILDE SOON FELT THAT HE WAS BEING INTERVIEWED.



HE HAD LEARNED NOTHING AND TIME WAS RUNNING OUT. FINALLY CHILDE IGNORED HER TO ASK IGESCU IF HE WOULD COMMENT ON THE "VAMPIRE INCIDENT"





SHE DROVE SLOWLY IN FIRST GEAR AS SHE TALKED AND ONCE SHE PUT HER HAND ON HIS LEG HE DID NOT MOVE



SHORTLY AFTER PASSING THROUGH THE GATEWAY OF THE INNER WALL, SHE DROVE OFF THE ROAD ONTO A NARROW STONE PATH WHICH LED THROUGH A BREAK IN THE TREES TO A CLEARING. A SMALL SUMMERHOUSE STOOD THERE

BUT HE'S NOT INTERESTED IN ME THE WAY SOME EMPLOYERS ARE INTERESTED IN THEIR FEMALE EMPLOYEES



SHE WAS LEANING CLOSER NOW AND HER PERFUME WAS SO STRONG.



... IT SEEMED TO SINK INTO HIS PORE.

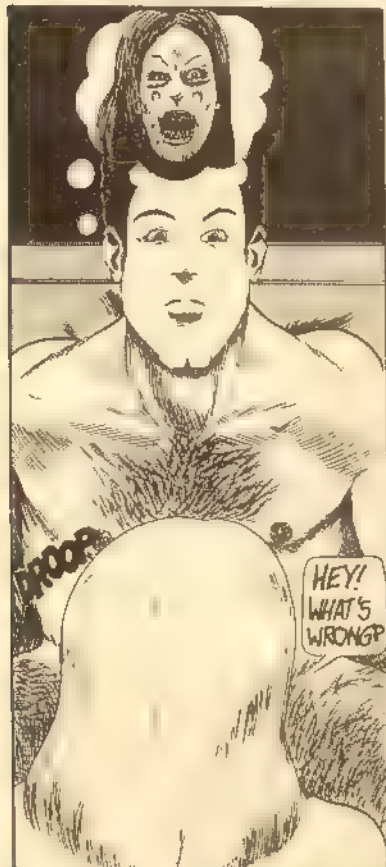


SHAKILY HE FOLLOWED HER OUT OF THE CAR BUT HE WAS NOT SO EXCITED THAT HE DID NOT WONDER ABOUT CAMERAS AND SOUND DEVICES. IF MAGDA SEDUCED HIM ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE SHE WAS EITHER VERY HARD UP OR HAD A MOTIVE HE MIGHT NOT LIKE IF HE KNEW OR POSSIBLY BOTH





A LOOK AROUND THE HOUSE CONVINCED HIM THAT THERE COULD BE NO HIDDEN CAMERAS WITHIN. BLACKMAIL COULDN'T BE THE GAME. WHAT DID HE HAVE TO LOSE?



LISTEN...DON'T GET MAD OR LAUGH...BUT DO YOU HAVE FALSE TEETH?

WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW? DO YOU WANT ME TO TAKE THEM OUT?

IF YOU HAVE FALSE TEETH.

DO I LOOK THAT OLD?

I'VE KNOWN 19-YEAR OLDS WITH CHOPPERS

KISS ME AND I'LL TELL YOU

HEY! WHAT'S WRONG?

HER KISSES BROUGHT REASSURANCE AND AROUSAL. WITHOUT ANSWERING SHE WENT DOWN ON HIM AGAIN. HE LEANED BACK AND LET HER WORK.



THERE WAS A WARM EXPLOSION AND THE FEELING AS IF A TIDE INSIDE HIM WERE WITHDRAWING TO SOME FAR OFF HORIZON.



SHE CONTINUED HER MOTIONS.

THERE'S NO USE  
YOUR PLAYING WITH  
I'VE NOT FOR SOME  
TIME ANYWAY I'M  
ALL SHOT OUT



SHE WENT TO A SMALL BAR AT ONE  
END OF THE HOUSE AND RETURNED  
WITH A SMALL BOTTLE OF LIQUEUR.

LICK THIS  
OFF AND  
SEE WHAT  
HAPPENS



IT WON'T DO  
ANYGOOD.

THE EFFECT WAS IMMEDIATE.

THE STUFF'S A LIQUEUR MADE  
IN IGESCU'S NATIVE PROVINCE  
IT REALLY BURNS AWAY THE  
INHIBITIONS!



HE WAS NOT ONLY READY, BUT EAGER  
AS WELL. SOON THEIR BODIES JOINED.

I'M GETTING  
DIZZY.  
FLIZZY.



HE KNEW HE'D MADE A MISTAKE. THAT LIQUID. IT MUST HAVE HAD THE  
PROPERTY OF BECOMING NARCOTIC IF IT WERE ON EPIDERMIS.



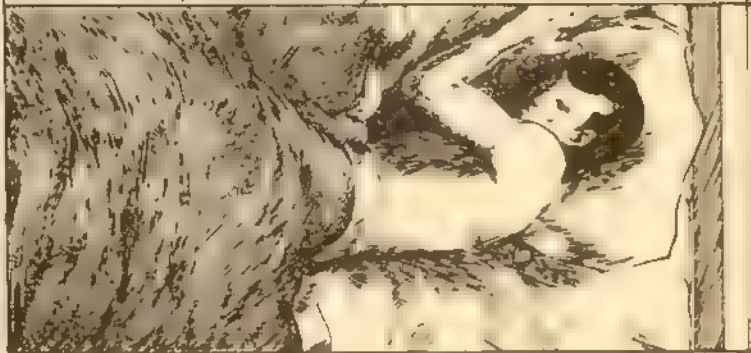
THEN HE REMEMBERED VAGUELY AN ORGASM THAT SEEMED TO GO ON  
FOREVER. THERE WERE BLANKS AND THEN THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS  
DRIVING DOWN A WINDING ROAD WHERE THE TREES BENT AND OFFERED  
HIM DELIGHTS. AS HE CAME CLOSER HE SAW THAT THE TREES WERE REAL  
AND THAT THEY PROMISED SOMETHING HE NEVER HAD BEFORE. AND SO IT WAS DEATH.

## CHAPTER THREE

HE AWOKE IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM OF  
DOCTOR'S HOSPITAL IN BEVERLY HILLS. HIS  
ONLY COMPLAINT WAS SLUGGISHNESS. HE  
WAS UNCONSCIOUS WHEN HE HAD BEEN  
PULLED OUT OF THE CAR BY A POLICEMAN.



FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER HE WAS DISCHARGED. IN ANOTHER THIRTY-  
FIVE HE WAS HOME. HE WENT TO BED WITH EARPLUGS TO BLOCK THE  
NOISE OF A PARTY IN HIS BUILDING, BUT HE COULDN'T BAR HIS THOUGHTS.





HE HAD BEEN DRUGGED AND SENT OUT WITH THE HOPE THAT HE WOULD KILL HIMSELF IN A CAR ACCIDENT. HE FELT ASHAMED AND SICK. THE DRUG HAD OVERCOME HIS NORMAL FASTIDIOUSNESS AND CAUTION. HE WOULD HAVE NEVER GONE DOWN ON A WOMAN HE HAD JUST MET.



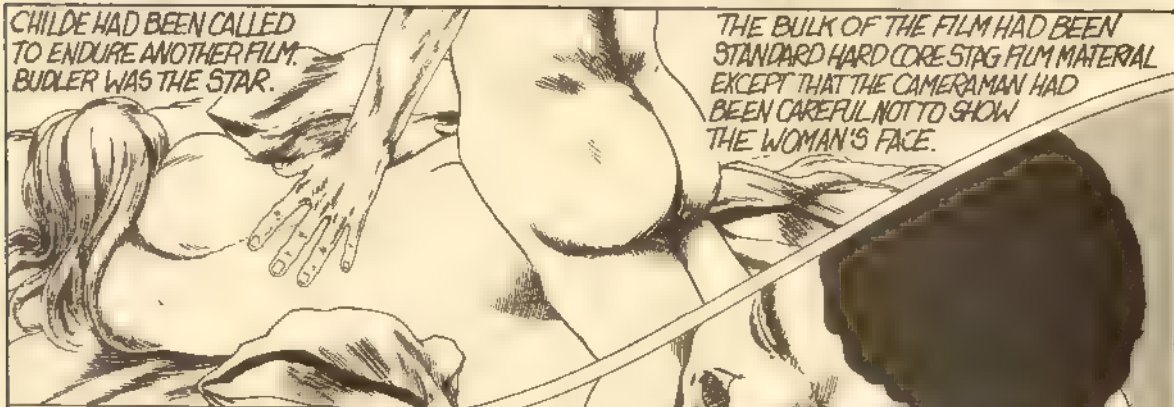
HE ALWAYS RESERVED THIS ACT EVEN IF HE WERE STRONGLY TEMPTED TO DO SO FOR WOMEN HE KNEW, LIKED OR LOVED AND WAS REASONABLY SURE WERE FREE OF SYPHILIS OR GONORRHEA.



CLEANSED, CHILDE REALIZED THAT HE WAS VERY HUNGRY. THE PHONE INTERRUPTED HIS CORNFLAKE FEAST.

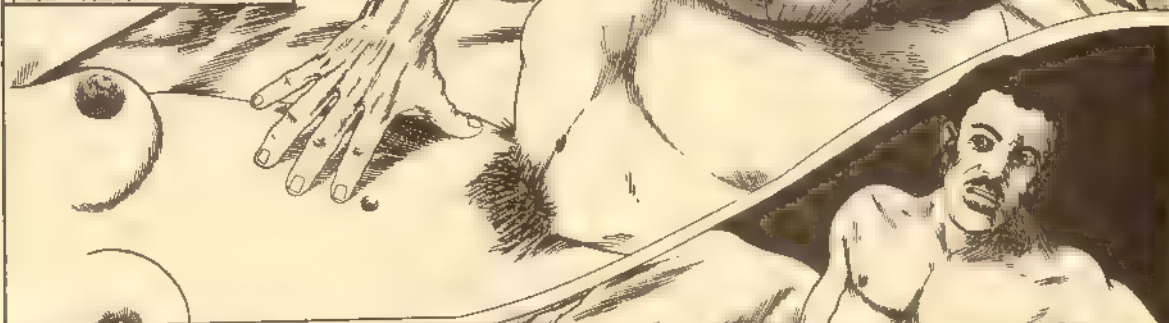


CHILDE HAD BEEN CALLED TO ENDURE ANOTHER FILM. BUDLER WAS THE STAR.



THE BULK OF THE FILM HAD BEEN STANDARD HARD CORE STAG FILM MATERIAL EXCEPT THAT THE CAMERAMAN HAD BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO SHOW THE WOMAN'S FACE.

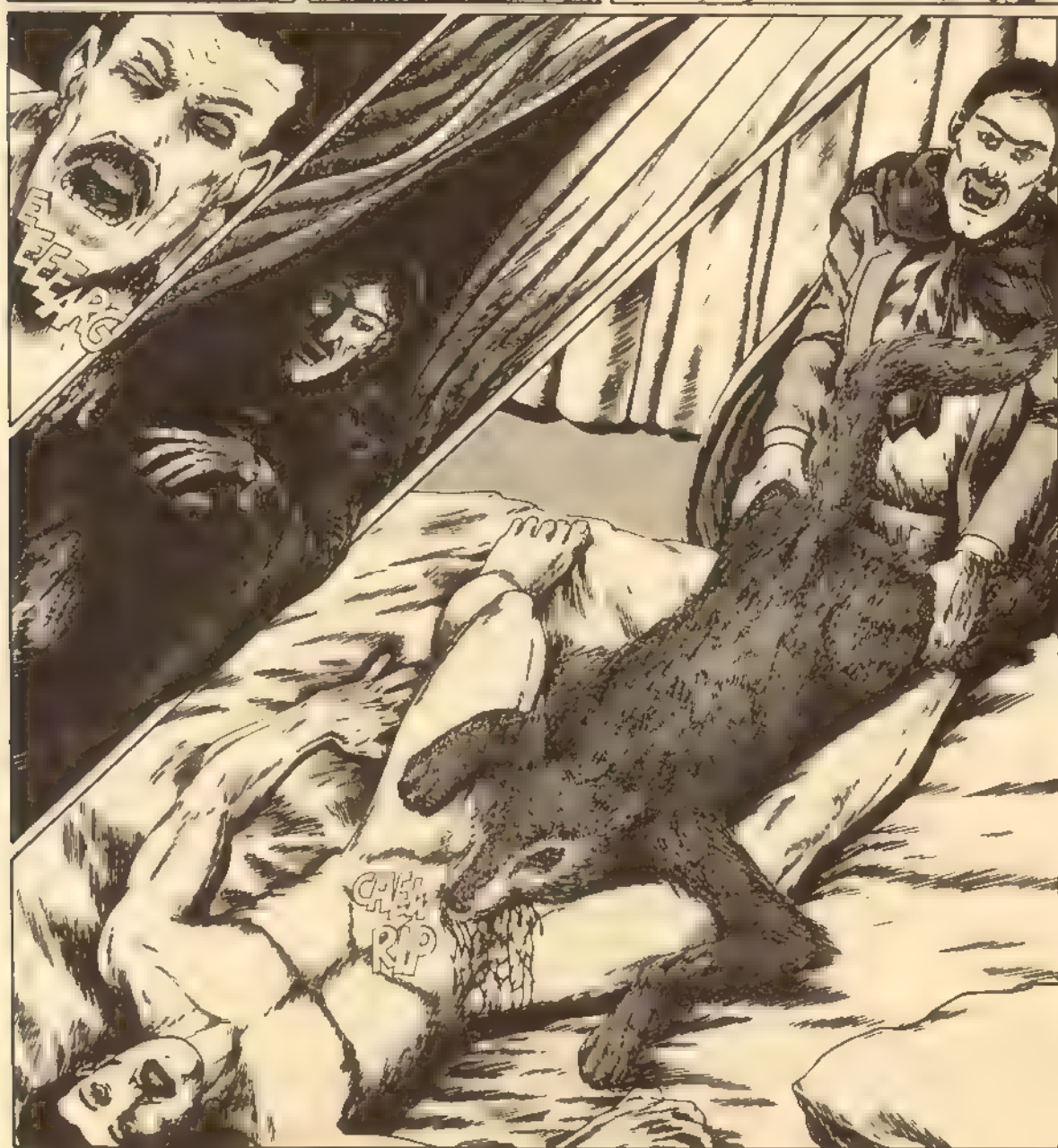
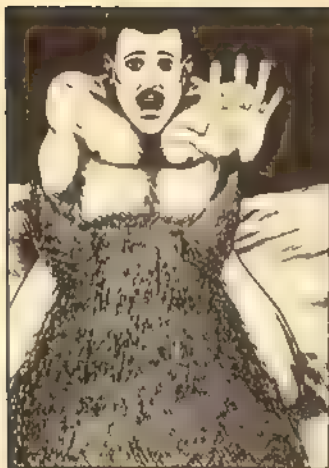
SHE CHANGED POSITION AND THEN...



SUDDENLY...









CHILDE BECAME SICK AGAIN AFTER-  
WARD HE TALKED TO THE COMMISSIONER  
WHO WAS ALSO PALE AND SHAKING BUT  
HE WAS NOT SHAKY IN HIS REFUSAL TO  
TAKE ANY ACTION AGAINST IGESCU

THE EVIDENCE IS NOT ONLY  
TOO SLIGHT IT'S NONEXISTENT  
IGESCU IS A VERY RICH AND  
POWERFUL MAN, WITH NO  
KNOWN CRIMINAL RECORD  
OR CONNECTIONS



HE UNFOLDED AN ALUMINUM LADDER AND  
CLIMBED IT. ONCE ON TOP HE DROPPED A  
THICK RUBBER TARP OVER THE BARRIERS  
HE HOISTED THE LADDER WITH A ROPE, DROPPED  
IT OVER THE OTHER SIDE AND DESCENDED.



GOOD! I'M  
RIGHT ON  
SCHEDULE

THE ESSENCE OF THE REMARKS WAS  
WHAT CHILDE HAD EXPECTED. HE  
WOULD HAVE TO GET MORE CONCLUSIVE  
EVIDENCE AND HE WOULD HAVE TO  
GET IT ON HIS OWN.



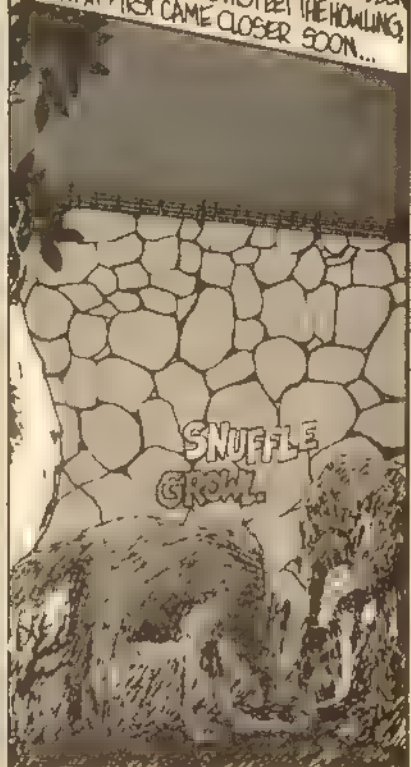
HE REPEATED THIS PROCEDURE WHEN HE  
REACHED THE INNER WALL AND WHEN HE GOT  
TO THE TOP OF THE WALL HE TOOK TWO  
STEAKS FROM HIS BACKPACK AND THREW  
THEM AS FAR AS HE COULD HE DESCENDED  
ON THE OUTSIDE AND WAITED



IT WAS DARK WHEN HE REACHED IGESCU'S  
HE WENT TO THE REAR OF HIS CAR AND  
REMOVED A BUNDLE HE HAD PREPARED  
IT TOOK TIME TO CARRY THE CUMBERSOME  
LOAD THROUGH THE WOODS.



THE HEAT DID NOT DIMINISH WITH THE COMING  
OF DARKNESS. THERE WAS TOTAL SILENCE AND  
MINUTES LATER THE FULL MOON ROSE SUDDEN  
HOWLING JERKED HIM TO HIS FEET THE HOWLING  
DISTANT AT FIRST CAME CLOSER SOON...



SNUFFLE  
GROWL



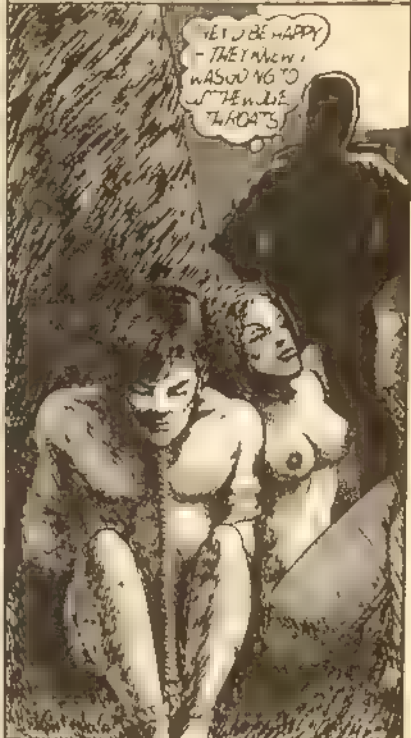
CHILDE WAITED AND CHECKED HIS REVOLVER AGAIN. AFTER FIVE MINUTES BY HIS WRISTWATCH HE CRAWLED OVER THE WALL, PULLING THE TARP AND LADDER AFTER HIM. GUN IN HAND HE SET OUT TO LOOK FOR THE WOLVES. THE BONES OF THE STEAKS HAD BEEN CRACKED AND PARTIALLY SWALLOWED. THE MEAT WAS GONE.



HE DIDN'T FIND THE WOLVES OR HE WAS NOT SURE WHAT HE DID FIND WERE THE WOLVES. HE STEPPED INTO A CLEARING AND THEN SUCCEEDED IN HIS BREATH.



HE HAD TO SIT DOWN FOR A WHILE. HE FELT SHAKY. ONLY WOLVES COULD HAVE DEVOURERD THE RAW DRUGGED MEAT. YET. AFTER A WHILE HE WAS ABLE TO ACT.



HE HEADED TOWARD WHERE THE HOUSE SHOULD BE AND WITHIN FIVE MINUTES SAW ITS BULK ON THE TOP OF THE HILL, AND RECTANGLES OF LIGHT. HE APPROACHED CAUTIOUSLY AND NOT SEEING ANYONE, DARTED ACROSS THE DRIVEWAY TO THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE.



THE WINDOW WAS CLOSED BUT NOT LOCKED. THE ROOM WAS DARK AND HOT AND MUSTY. HE GROFED ALONG THE WALL UNTIL HE FOUND A DOOR AND SLOWLY SWUNG IT OUT. IT REVEALED A HALLWAY, DIMLY LIT BY MOONLIGHT.



AS HE STEPPED OUT INTO THE HALLWAY HE SUDDENLY FOUND HIMSELF FACING A TALL BLACK-HAIRED WOMAN. THE WOMAN IN THE PORTRAIT ABOVE THE MANTEL IN GIESCU'S DRAWING ROOM... DELORES DEL OSOROKA!



SHE BELCONED TO HIM AND WALKED SLOWLY AROUND THE CORNER.



# CHAPTER FOUR

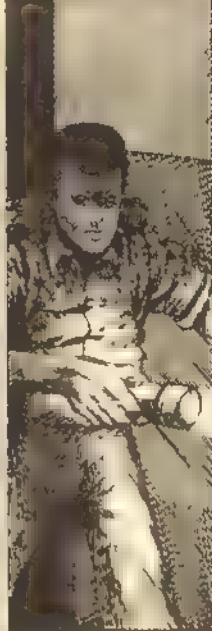
HE MADE THE CORNER IN TIME TO SEE A PANEL SWING SHUT

AFTER SOME EFFORT HE DISCOVERED THAT BY MOVING AN OIL PAINTING THE PANEL WOULD OPEN BRIEFLY AND SHUT AUTOMATICALLY

AS THE PANEL OPENED HE STEPPED THROUGH CAUTIOUSLY MAKING SURE THERE WAS FIRM FOOTING IN THE DARKNESS

THE FLASHLIGHT SHOWED A DUSTY CORRIDOR ABOUT FOUR FEET WIDE AND SEVEN HIGH IT DID NOT END AS HE EXPECTED IT MIGHT AT THE END OF THE HALLWAY

A WELL OF DARKNESS TURNED OUT TO BE A STAIRWAY UNDER THE HALL AT ITS BOTTOM WAS A PLATFORM AND ANOTHER STAIRWAY LEADING UP, HE PRESUMED TO ANOTHER PASSAGEWAY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HALL HE EXAMINED THE WALLS CEILING AND FLOOR CAREFULLY AND DISCOVERED A PANEL ON HINGES

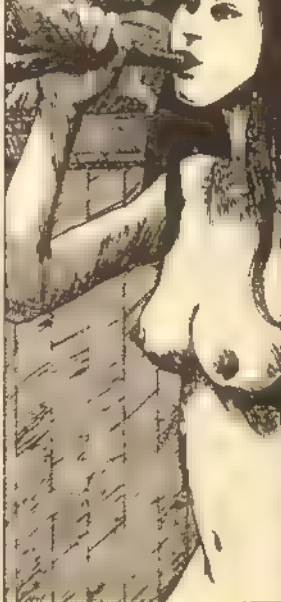
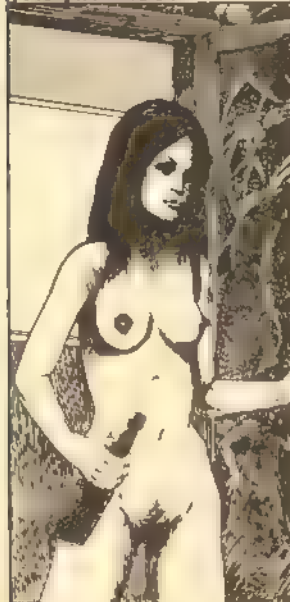


SEVEN SECONDS LATER A WOMAN CAME THROUGH THE DOOR. THE WOMAN LOOKED SO DETERMINED HE COULD NOT RESIST THE FEELING THAT HE MIGHT SEE SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT IF HE STAYED AND WATCHED.

SHE HELD A LONG NECKED BOTTLE TO HER LIPS AS SHE WALKED TOWARD THE DRESSER. SHE DRANK UNTIL ABOUT TWO INCHES OF THE LIQUID WAS LEFT

AS SHE LEANED CLOSER CHILDE STEPPED BACK BECAUSE IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE THAT SHE WOULD NOT SEE HIM THEN HE STEPPED FORWARD AGAIN IF SHE KNEW THIS WAS A ONE-WAY MIRROR SHE DID NOT CARE IF ANOTHER WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE OR SUPPOSED NO ONE HOSTILE WOULD BE THERE

SHE SEEMED TO FIND HER INSPECTION OF HER FACE SATISFACTORY AND AFTER LOOKING AT HER BODY FOUND IT PLEASING AS WELL CHILDE FELT UNCOMFORTABLE AS IF HE WERE DOING SOMETHING PERVERSED BY SPYING ON HER BUT HE ALSO BEGAN TO GET EXCITED







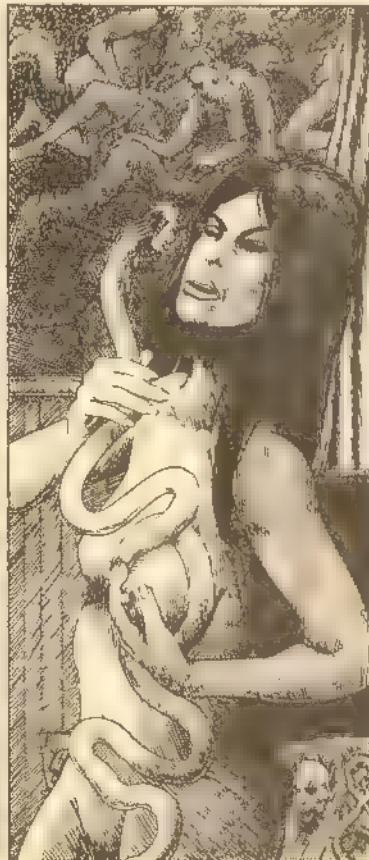
CHILDE FELT BOTH EXCITED AND REPULSED. PART OF THE REPULSION WAS BECAUSE HE WAS NO VOYEUR. HE FELT THAT IT WAS INDECENT TO WATCH ANYONE UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.



IT WAS TRUE THAT HE DID NOT HAVE TO STAY, BUT HE WAS HERE TO INVESTIGATE A MURDER AND A KIDNAPPING AND THIS CERTAINLY LOOKED WORTH INVESTIGATING.



HE WATCHED AND SUDDENLY SHE SLUMPED BACK HEAVILY INTO THE CHAIR. SOMETHING GLISTENING, SNAKE-LIKE, SHOT FROM BETWEEN HER LEGS.







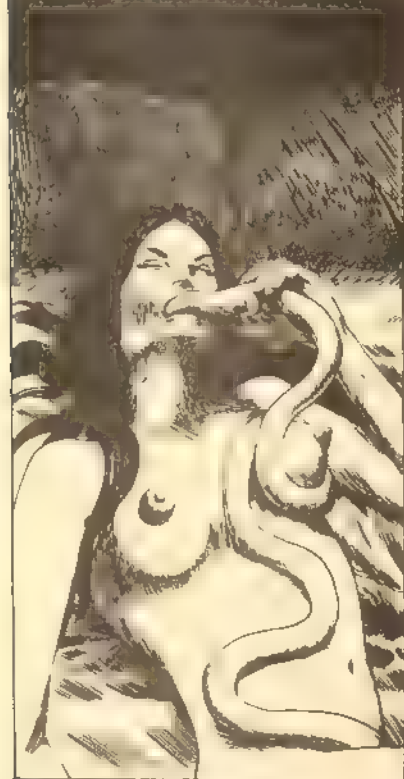
CHILDE HAD BEEN TOO SHOCKED TO DO ANYTHING BUT REACT EMOTIONALLY NOW! HE BEGAN TO THINK HOW COULD THE THING BREATHE WITH ITS HEAD IN HER MOUTH OR WHILE COILED IN HER WOMB OR WHATEVER RECESS OF HER BODY IT LIVED IN - A CONNECTION TO HER CIRCULATORY SYSTEM?



SHE TREMBLED AND STAGGERED BACKWARDS UNTIL SHE FELL BACK ONTO THE BED

THE LONG BODY MADE A ZIG-ZAG RETREAT INTO THE DARK RED BUSH AND FISSURE, TRAILING THE STILL SPURTING HEAD UNTIL ALL WAS SWALLOWED UP OUT OF SIGHT. THE WOMAN ROSE AND REPLACED HER TEETH BEHIND THE MIRROR...

A SICKENED HAROLD CHILDE CLOSE TO CONTINUE HIS SEARCH WHAT HE HAD SEEN SHOOK HIS WHOLE CONCEPT OF REALITY IF THERE WAS MORE TO COME, HE WASN'T INTERESTED BUT BEFORE HE HAD TAKEN FIVE STEPS THE FLOOR DROPPED AWAY BENEATH HIS FEET. HIS HEAD STRUCK SOMETHING HARD...





HE DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG HE HAD BEEN THERE WHEN HE AWOKE HIS FLASHLIGHT, WRISTWATCH, CAMERA AND REVOLVER WERE GONE HIS HEAD ACHED AND HIS MOUTH WAS AS DRY AS IF HE WERE WAKING AFTER A THREE DAY DRUNK. THE DOOR OPENED.

THE BARON SAYS YOU SHOULD COME TO DINNER.

THERE'S CLOTHES YOUR SIZE OR NEAR ENOUGH IN THE CLOSET

CHULDE WASHED HIMSELF, DRESSED IN A TUXEDO AND FOLLOWED GLAM THROUGH SEVERAL HALLWAYS AND THEN DOWN A FLIGHT OF STAIRS.

WELCOME MR CHULDE DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES



AS THE BARON ADDRESSED HIM AGAIN AS 'MR CHULDE' HE REALIZED WITH A START THAT HIS TRUE IDENTITY HAD BEEN DISCOVERED

HOW DID YOU LEARN MY NAME? I CARRIED NO IDENTIFICATION...

YOU DON'T REALLY EXPECT ME TO TELL YOU?

NEXT TO HIM MRS GRASATCHOW WAS MAKING SHORT WORK OF AN ENTIRE BONITA FISH AND A HUGE BOWL OF SALAD. SHE DRANK BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE MEAL FROM A GALLON DECANTER OF BOURBON. THE DECANTER WAS FULL WHEN SHE SAT DOWN AND EMPTY WHEN THE DISHES WERE CLEARED OFF THE TABLE.

AS MRS. GRASATCHOW LIT A TEN DOLLAR CIGAR AND BEGAN TO DOWN AN ENORMOUS SNIFFER OF BRANDY, THE BARON SPOKE...

YOU REALIZE, OF COURSE THAT I COULD EASILY HAVE HAD YOU KILLED FOR TRESPASSING, VOYEURISM ETC., BUT MOSTLY FOR ENTERING. NOW PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL ME WHAT YOU ARE UP TO?

CHULDE SHRUGGED AND BEGAN TO EAT THE NEW YORK CUT STEAK HE HAD CHOSEN



CHILDE DECIDED TO SPEAK FRANKLY IF IGESCU KNEW HIS NAME HE UNDOUBTEDLY KNEW THAT HE WAS A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR AND COLBEN'S PARTNER..



THE LAD KNOWS  
WHERE AND IF  
THEY DON'T HEAR  
FROM ME AT A  
CERTAIN TIME  
THEY'LL COME OUT  
TO FIND OUT WHY!

OF COURSE AND WHAT  
WOULD THEY FIND IF THEY  
DID COME OUT HERE?

CHILDE THOUGHT OF THE TWO DRUGGED,  
NAKED PEOPLE HE'D LEFT TIED UP  
IGESCU WOULD HAVE TROUBLE EXPLAINING  
THEM TO THE POLICE. AT THAT MOMENT,  
HOWEVER, THE TWO INTRODUCED AS  
VASILI CHORONKA AND MRS KOBUSCHNER  
JOINED THEM AT THE TABLE.



WINE MISTER  
CHILDE JOIN  
ME IN THE  
LIBRARY



HAVE YOU READ  
LE GARRAULT?

NO I HAVEN'T AND RIGHT  
NOW I'M MORE INTERESTED  
IN MY SURVIVAL!

FOR THE PRESENT  
LET US PRESENT  
THAT YOU ARE MY  
GUEST AND MAY  
LEAVE ANYTIME  
YOU WISH

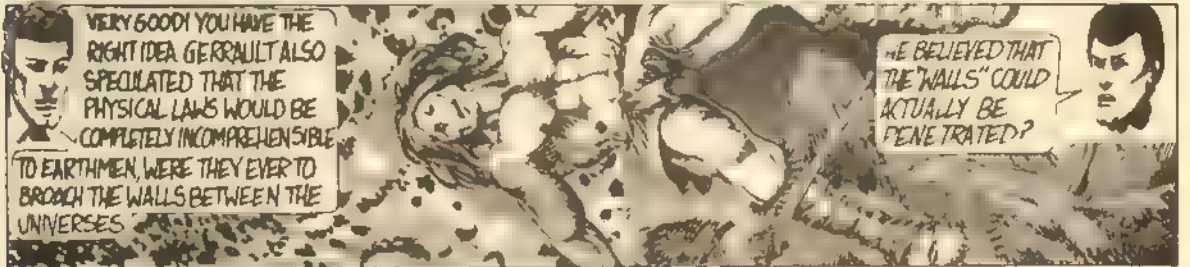
I AM NOT TELLING  
YOU ABOUT  
LE GARRAULT TO  
PASS THE TIME

LE GARRAULT SPECULATED THAT  
THE SO-CALLED VAMPIRES,  
WEREWOLVES, POLTERGEISTS  
GHOSTS AND SO ON MIGHT BE  
LIVING CREATURES FROM A  
PARALLEL UNIVERSE DO YOU KNOW  
WHAT A PARALLEL UNIVERSE IS?



I BELIEVE IT'S A SCIENCE  
FICTION CONCEPT ABOUT THE  
POSSIBILITY OF AN INFINITE  
NUMBER OF UNIVERSES EXIST-  
ING IN THE SAME SPACE THEY  
CAN DO THIS BECAUSE THEY ARE POLARIZED  
OR AT RIGHT ANGLES TO ONE ANOTHER

VERY GOOD! YOU HAVE THE  
RIGHT IDEA GERRAULT ALSO  
SPECULATED THAT THE  
PHYSICAL LAWS WOULD BE  
COMPLETELY INCOMPREHENSIBLE  
TO EARTH MEN, WERE THEY EVER TO  
BROACH THE WALLS BETWEEN THE  
UNIVERSES



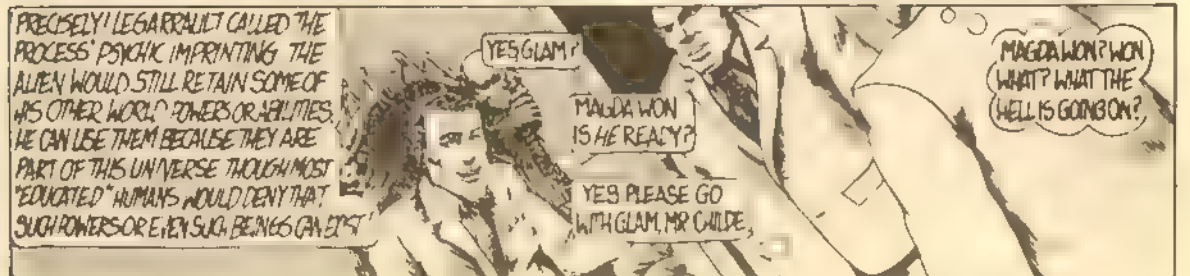
HE BELIEVED THAT  
THE "WALLS" COULD  
ACTUALLY BE  
PENETRATED?

YES HE SAID THAT CREATURES  
MIGHT ENTER OUR UNIVERSE  
THROUGH BREAKS CAUSED BY  
FLAWS OR WEAKNESS BUT THEY  
WOULD HAVE FORMS SO ALIEN THAT THE  
HUMAN BRAIN WOULD HAVE TO GIVE THEM  
FORMS TO EXPLAIN THEM TO SURVIVE THEY  
WOULD HAVE TO ASSUME FORMS THAT WOULD  
CONFORM TO THE PHYSICAL LAWS OF THIS UNIVERSE



WHAT YOU ARE TRYING  
TO SAY THEN IS THAT  
THE ALIEN WOULD BE  
GIVEN HIS FORM AND A  
CERTAIN PART OF HIS NATURE BY  
HUMAN'S ULTIMATELY BECOMING WHAT  
THE HUMANS BELIEVE HIM TO BE

PRECISELY! LE GARRAULT CALLED THE  
PROCESS PSYCHIC IMPRINTING THE  
ALIEN WOULD STILL RETAIN SOME OF  
HIS OTHER WORLD POWERS OR ABILITIES.  
HE CAN USE THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE  
PART OF THIS UNIVERSE THOUGH MOST  
"EDUCATED" HUMANS WOULD DENY THAT  
SUCH POWERS OR EVEN SUCH BEINGS CAN EXIST



YES GLAM?

MAIDA WON  
IS HE READY?

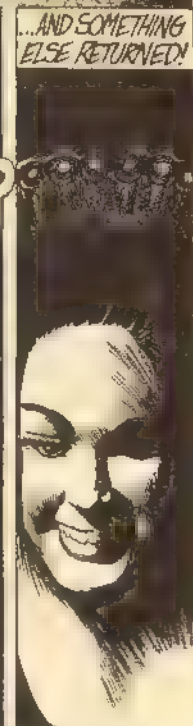
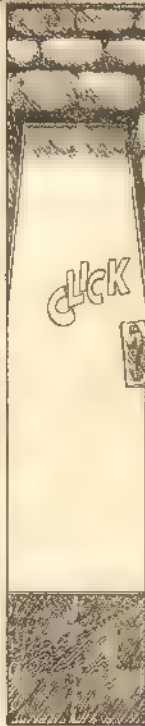
YES PLEASE GO  
WITH GLAM, MR CHILDE

MAGDA WON? WON  
WHAT? WHAT THE  
HELL IS GOING ON?



# CHAPTER FIVE

MAN-HANDLED THE ONLY TERM THAT COULD DESCRIBE GLAM'S TREATMENT OF CHILDE. GLAM EXPLAINED THAT MAGDA AND GRASATCHOW HAD GAMBLLED FOR HIS FAVORS AND THAT MAGDA WOULD JOIN HIM SHORTLY. THE BITTERNESS IN GLAM'S VOICE WAS UNDISGUISED.



...AND SOMETHING ELSE RETURNED!

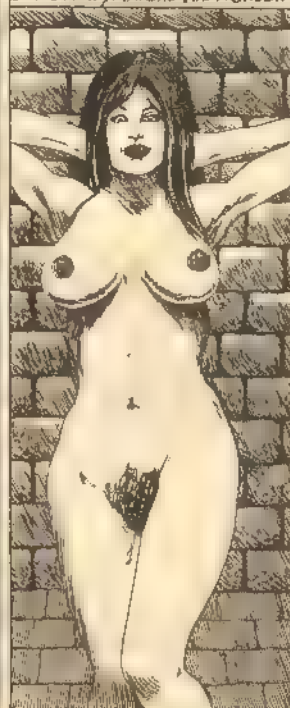
CHILDE WAS TOO SCARED TO RESPOND TO THE ARMS AROUND HIM AND THE BREASTS AND LIPS PRESSED CLOSE TO HIM. WARM SALIVA LEAKED FROM HER MOUTH OVER HIS CHIN AND DOWN HIS CHEST. SHE WAS PANTING.



CHILDE TRIED TO BACK AWAY. THE WALL STOPPED HIM. THE WOMAN MUTTERED SOMETHING IN SPANISH. IN WHAT WAS INTENDED TO BE A SOOTHING TONE. SHE BACKED AWAY AND BEGAN TO UNDRESS SWIFTLY.



CHILDE, SEEING THE OUTWARD SIGNS OF HER SEXUAL IMPATIENCE, FELT LESS AFRAID. SHE LOOKED TOO MUCH OF THE PROTOPLASM AND TOO LITTLE OF THE ECTOPLASM FOR HIM TO BELIEVE, TO THE CORE OF HIS MIND, THAT SHE WAS A GHOST.

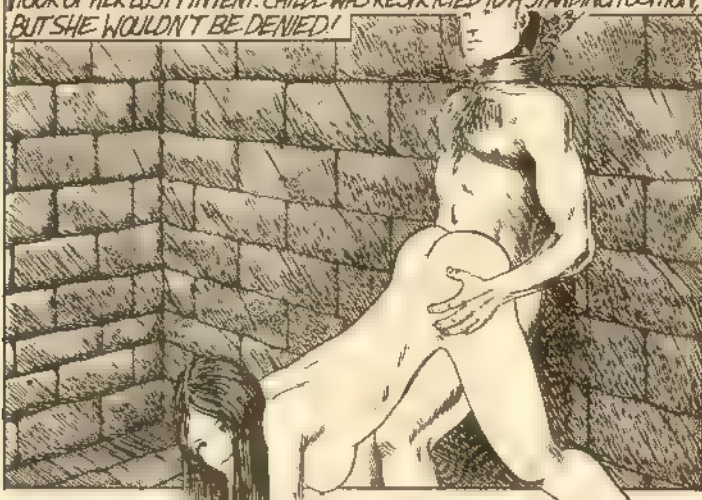


HER KISSES AND THE STROKE OF HER HAND HAD FAILED TO AROUSE AN ERECTION. THE TOUCH OF HER HAND TURNED HIS FLESH COLD AS A DEAD MAN'S. HE WAS LITERALLY SPOOKED. SHE FINALLY DROPPED TO HER KNEES AND...





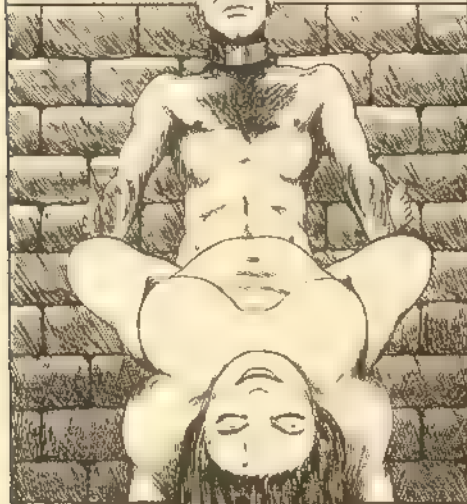
HIS FLESH BEGAN TO WARM AS THE OLD, FAMILIAR, BUT NEVER BORING SENSATIONS BEGAN TO COME BACK. HER INGENUITY MARKED THE VIGOR OF HER LUSTY INTENT. CHILDE WAS RESTRICTED TO A STANDING POSITION, BUT SHE WOULDN'T BE DENIED!



SHE MOVED BACK AND FORTH A FEW TIMES AND HE CAME. THE ORGASM WAS SO EXQUISITE THAT HE PASSED OUT VERY BRIEFLY. IT WAS AS IF SHE HAD GENERATED A CURRENT THAT SHOT LIGHTNING DOWN HIS NERVES.



SHE RESTORED HIS RIGIDITY WITH HER MOUTH AND MOUNTED HIM AGAIN, THIS TIME FACING HIM.



SHE SHUDDERED AND SOBBED APPARENTLY HAVING ONE ORGASM ON THE HEELS OF THE NEXT.



CHILDE BEGAN TO FEEL AS THOUGH SHE HAD ROBBED HIM OF A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF VITAL ENERGY AND STRENGTHENED AND SOLIDIFIED HERSELF ONCE AGAIN THE ELECTRIC CHARGE JOLTED HIM.



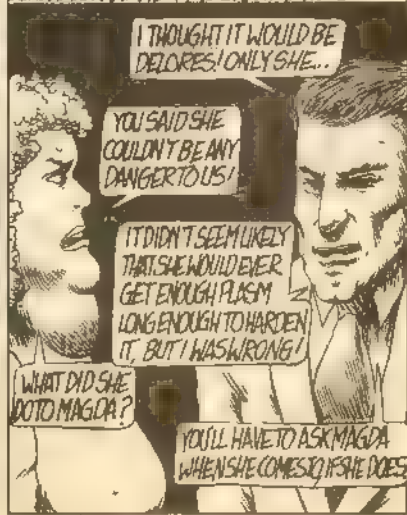
DELORES SLID OFF OF HIM, GRABBED HER CLOTHING AND STEPPED THROUGH AN OPENING THAT APPEARED IN THE WALL.



THE KEY MADE A SILVERY ARC AND DROPPED JUST OUT OF HIS REACH A SECOND AFTER THE STONE BLOCK SLIPPED BACK INTO PLACE. MRS. GRASATCHOW SURGED INTO THE ROOM. SHE SNIFFED LOUDLY AND THEN BELLOWED...



MRS. GRASATCHOW'S PALE SKIN MANAGED TO TURN EVEN WHITER THE BARON ENTERED...

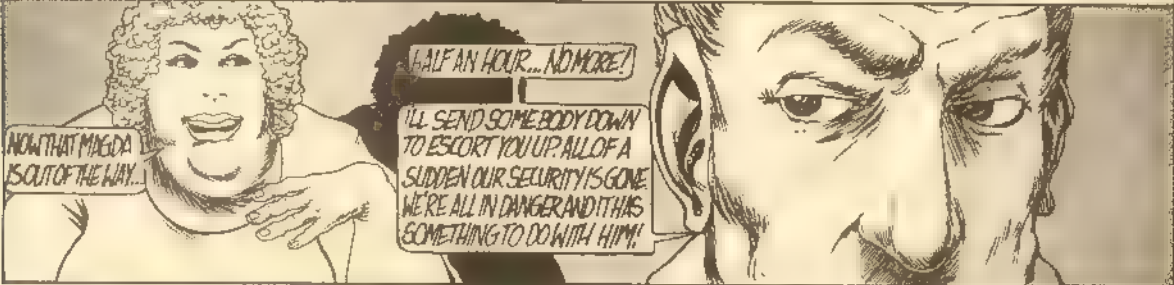




GLAM TRUDGED IN HOLDING THE LIMP, NAKED BODY OF MAGDA.



CHILDE WAS ESCORTED TO ANOTHER ROOM AND AGAIN TETHERED BY A CHAIN AND A METAL COLLAR.



HALF AN HOUR... NO MORE!

NOW THAT MAGDA IS OUT OF THE WAY...

I'LL SEND SOMEBODY DOWN TO ESCORT YOU UP. ALL OF A SUDDEN OUR SECURITY IS GONE. WE'RE ALL IN DANGER AND IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIM!

MOMENTS LATER



YECCH!!

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME!

SPOOK-BITCH SUCKED YOU DRY, HUH? HA HA HA!

HER POWER WAS INCREDIBLE. AN OPEN-HANDED SLAP HAD STUNNED HIM. HE REGAINED HIS SENSES TO FIND HIMSELF TURNED AROUND, HIS FACE TO THE WALL. SOMETHING LODGED IN HIS RECTUM WAS SENDING HEAVINESS AND COLD THROUGH HIS BODY...



YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO FORGET THIS...

I WISH I WERE YOU SO I COULD FLICK ME!



YOU LITTLE ASSHOLE!!

SLAP!

THIS'LL PUT SOME LIFE INTO YOU, ONCE IT'S IN YOU!!

I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING... IT'S LIKE I'M FROZEN.



SHE UNLOCKED THE COLLAR AND ISSUED THE COMMAND "EAT ME." HE WAS UNWILLING, BUT UNABLE TO RESIST. HE FELT NO SEXUAL STIMULATION; ONLY DISGUST.



AT ANOTHER "ORDER" HE CRAWLED INTO THE "MISSIONARY" POSITION. SHE PROCEEDED TO HAVE WHAT SEEMED TO BE A MUDDIED ORGASM, JUDGING BY THE FRENCIES.



CHILDE HAD REGAINED SOME ABILITY TO MOVE OF HIS OWN VOLITION WHEN SHE PUSHED HIM ASIDE AND WENT TO THE CORNER AFTER HER BOTTLE OF WHISKEY.



AFTER DOWNING A FOURTH OF THE BOTTLE, SHE LOOKED AT HER WATCH.



THAT STUFF HAS A PECULIAR EFFECT YOU DIDN'T FEEL ANYTHING WHILE WE WERE AT IT, BUT WAIT! I WISH I COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU THEN!



SHE CHARGED, ONE HAND OPEN TO GRAB HIM, ONE HAND CLUTCHING ANOTHER CONE. CHILDE LAUNCHED HIMSELF AT HER.



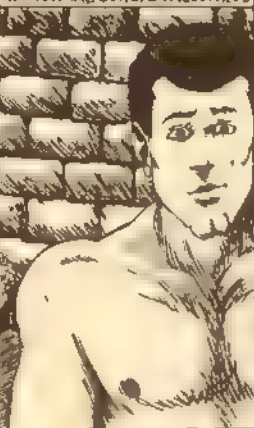
ASTONISHED SHE LET HERSELF FALL BACK AGAINST THE WALL.



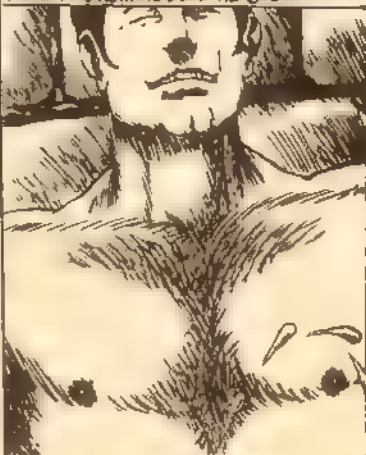
SUMMONING ALL HIS STRENGTH, CHILDE SLAMMED HIS HEEL INTO HER CHIN, DRIVING THE BACK OF HER SKULL SHARPLY INTO THE WALL.



AS THE FAT WOMAN COLLAPSED THE CONE REVERSED ITS EFFECT. CHILDE EXPERIENCED AN ACCELERATED REPLAY OF THEIR ENTIRE SEXUAL ENCOUNTER.



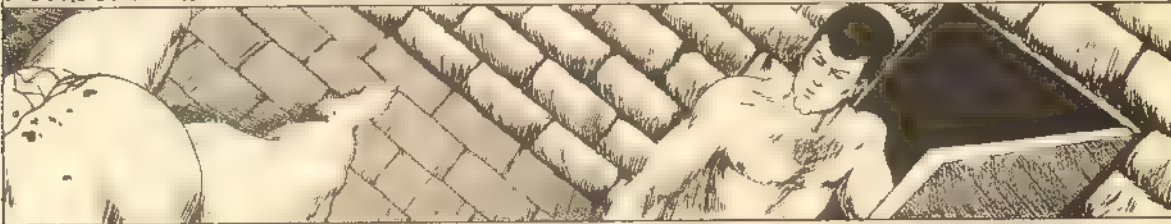
HE NOW FOUND HIMSELF PERFECT AND JETTING. HIS BODY STORMED BY THE DELAYED ORGASM, HE SLUMPED BACK HEAVILY, HELPLESSLY. THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE HE COULD DO.





# CHAPTER SIX

WHEN HE REGAINED CONTROL HE GOT UP AND STAGGERED TO THE DOOR THE ORGASM HAD DONE NOTHING TO DIMINISH HIS ERECTION. HE GRABBED MRS. GRASATCHOW'S PURSE AND UNLOCKED THE DOOR WITH ANOTHER KEY.



THOUGH HE HATED THE IDEA OF ANY DELAY HE HAD TO INVESTIGATE THE OTHER ROOMS ALONG THE HALL. THERE WAS A CHANCE OTHER PRISONERS WERE HELD THERE. PERHAPS SYBIL! SIX DOORS WERE CLOSED THREE DOORS WERE UNLOCKED AND CONTAINED NOTHING OF INTEREST. THREE OPENED TO THE KEY IN THE FAT WOMAN'S PURSE.



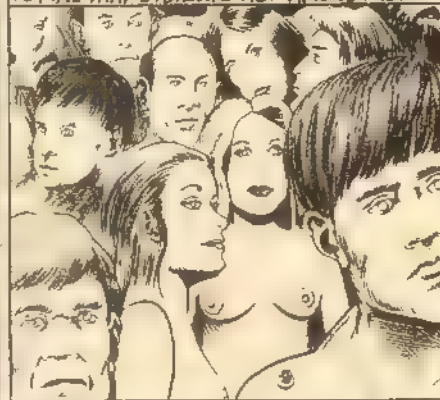
HE DRESSED IN CLOTHING HE FOUND IN A DRESSER IN THE THIRD ROOM IN HIS SEARCH FOR SHOES HE FOUND TWO DRAWERS FULL OF FLAT PLASTIC ENVELOPES



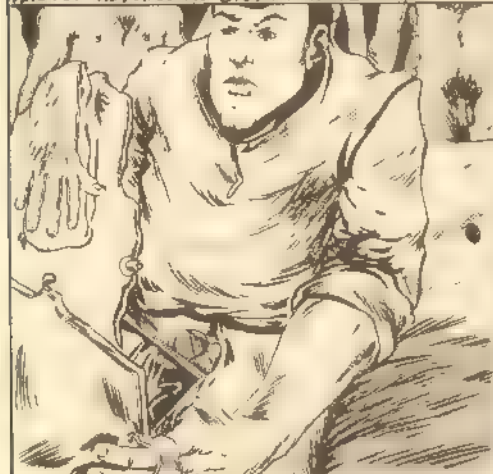
CHILDE'S EFFORTS WERE DISRUPTED BY A SEMI-EPILEPTIC ORGASM!



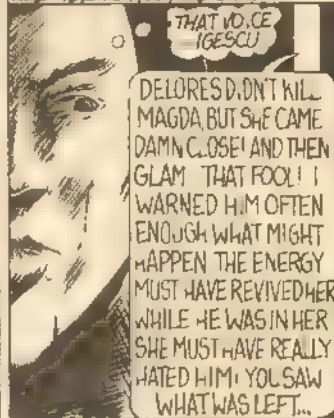
HE CONTINUED INFLATING THE SKINS UNTIL ALL THIRTY-EIGHT BOBBED BACK AND FORTH IN THE DRAFT FROM THE AIR VENT HE WAS RELIEVED TO FIND THAT SYBIL WAS NOT AMONG THEM



CHILDE DEFLATED COLBEN AND A COUPLE OTHER 'BALLOONS' AND PUT THEM IN MRS. GRASATCHOW'S PURSE.



CHILDE FOUND THE ACTUATOR FOR ANOTHER PANEL AND ENTERED THE PASSAGEWAY. HIS TWENTY MINUTES OF PROWLING HAD YIELDED NOTHING UNTIL...



CHILDE STEPPED THROUGH THE DOOR INTO THE HALLWAY AND RAN TO THE ONLY DOOR OPENED. HE WENT IN...







GLAM HAD DIED WITH HIS BOOTS ON ALSO HIS PANTS. HE HAD BEEN TOO EAGER TO TAKE ALL HIS CLOTHES OFF SOME THING HAD MORE VIOLENTLY SQUEEZED HIM



AFTER A THISSAU THIS CHILDE TOOK ONE OF TWO RIFTERS THAT HUNG ON THE WALL

AND AT THE SOUND OF APPROACHING VOICES FROM THE HALL STEPPED INTO THE PASSAGEWAY



HE HAD ONLY TAKEN A FEW STEPS IN THE DARKNESS WHEN HE WAS SEIZED BY ANOTHER SPRINTING INTERLOPER ECSTASY THE ONE WAS SLAMMING HE REARED FOR A QUICKER RESPONSE



HE WAS CLOSE TO PANIC EVERY SECOND HE SPENT IN THE HOUSE NOCED AT HIS CLUNKS OF RELATIVES OR DEATH THERE WAS NOWHERE TO RUN HE WAS BEING HUNTED ON THE STREETS THERE WAS NO CHOICE HE WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE



FIRE! OF COURSE I WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF BEFORE? IF I CAN JUST GET OUT OF THIS MALL

HIS GROPING FINALLY PRODUCED A STUD THAT ADMITTED HIM TO A ROOM NEAR THE BARON'S. HE PULLED BOOKS FROM SHELVES TORE OUT PAGES AND CRUMPLED NEWSPAPER HE FOUND A CIGARETTE LIGHTER IN THE JUNK



CHILDE FOUND A FLASHLIGHT AND DESERTED THE FLAMING ROOM HE PROPPED THE DARKNESS OF THE PASSAGE WITH THE LIGHT THEN HE FELT SOMETHING AND SPONDER



FAINT CLICKS SOUNDED CLAWS ON THE NAKED BOARDS OF THE FLOOR A HOWL MADE HIM JUMP SUDDENLY THE CLICKING BECAME RAPID THE FLASHLIGHT CAUGHT A WOLF IN ITS BEAM AS IT RAN INTO THE CORNER AND ROARED THAT IT H





CHILD THRUST ALMOST BLINDLY AT THE HURTLING SHAPE...



A SHOCK RAN ALONG HIS ARM AND TH... HE HAD LEANED FORWARD, IN WHAT HE HOPED WAS A REASONABLE FENCE... SINCE HE WAS THROWN BACKWARD...



HE HAD BEEN LUCKY THE WOLF WAS DEAD BUT HE KNEW IT HAD A MATE SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE, THAT WOULD HAVE GOOD CAUSE TO TEAR HIS FLESH HE WOULD NOT WAIT TO BE SO...



HE HOPED THE FIRES WOULD KEEP EVERYONE OCCUPIED HE RAN DOWN THE CORRIDOR AND TOOK A LEFT WHERE IT INTERSECTED ANOTHER AT RIGHT ANGLES THE BEAM DANCING OUT AHEAD PCKET OUT A SECTION OF WALL AND A LOCK HE PRESSED THE "WOLF" READY



NO DETECTABLE HEART BEAT, CHEST'S NOT MOVING! HE WOULDN'T HAVE STOPPED SEARCHING FOR DELORES OR ME UNLESS HE HAD TO WHY HASN'T HE POSTED A GUARD OR DONE SOMETHING TO PROTECT HIMSELF?



THERE WAS SOMETHING HIDDEN SOMEWHERE IN THE ROOM HE TOOK A QUICK LOOK AROUND AND SAW NOTHING THE SHADOWS SEEMED DARKER THE LIGHT OF THE CANDLE'S HEAVIER HE STOPPED TO LOOK UNDER THE FUR THE COFFIN RESTING... SOME THING STRUCK





FIRE TORE AT HIS BACK AND HIPS AND THE BACKS OF HIS THIGHS, BUT THE WOLF'S MOMENTUM SENT IT TUMBLING ACROSS HIM AND HE WAS ABLE TO REGAIN HIS FEET

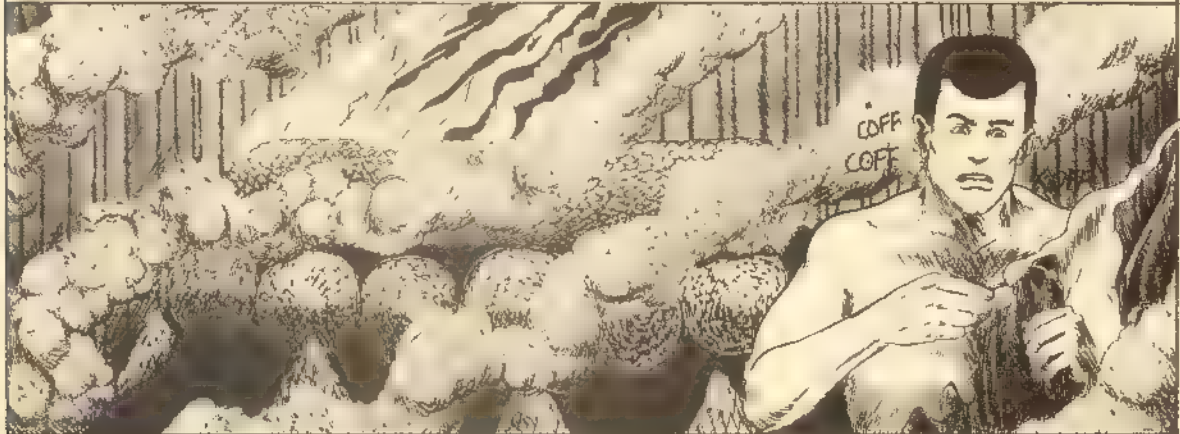


FANTING AND SHAKING CHILDE PULLED THE SWORD FROM THE WOLF. HE CLIMBED UP ON THE OAKEN FRAME AND RAISED THE SWORD WITH BOTH HANDS...



THERE WAS NO DEATH RATTLE, NO SPURTING OR SEEPIG. HE HOPED IGESCU WAS PERMANENTLY DEAD.

CHILDE STARTED A FIRE IN THE ROOM AND IN IGESCU'S COFFIN SMOKE FILLED THE ROOM. HE BEGAN TO COUGH.



AS HE HUNTED FOR THE WINDOWS A GRUNTING AND SQUEALING SHOT FROM THE WALL ENTRANCE. THERE WAS A RAPID CLICKING A TREMBLING OF THE FLOORBOARDS AND HE WAS KNOCKED TO ONE SIDE. HE ROLLED AWAY UNDER COVER OF THE SMOKE, WHILE THE THING THAT STRUCK HIM, HUNTED FOR HIM



AS HE REACHED THE WINDOWS THE SOUND OF HOOVES STOPPED ABRUPTLY. THE SQUEALING WAS LESS QUESTING AND MORE FEROCIOUS AND CHALLENGING. HOOVES HIT THE FLOOR PUNCTUATING THE SOUND OF LOUD HISSING



CHILDE GUIPPED OUT AFTER UNFASTENING AND PUSHING OUT THE LOWER EDGE OF THE SCREEN HE STRUCK A BUSH BROKE IT, FELT AS IF HE HAD BROKEN HIMSELF TOO, ROLLED OFF IT AND THEN STOOD UP.

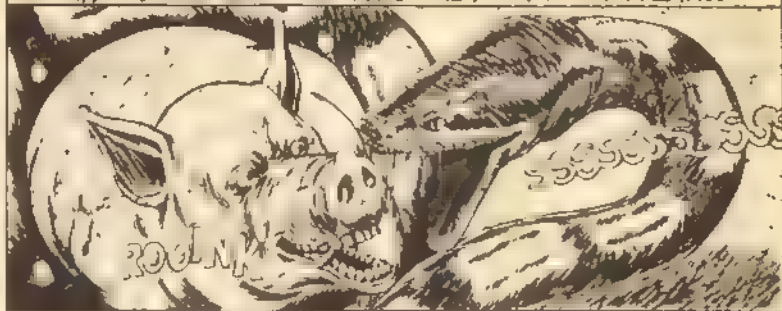




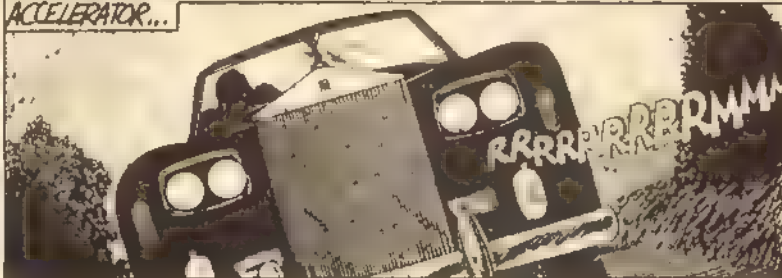
TWO BODIES BROKE THROUGH THE WINDOW ABOVE HIM AND CRASHED TO THE GROUND.



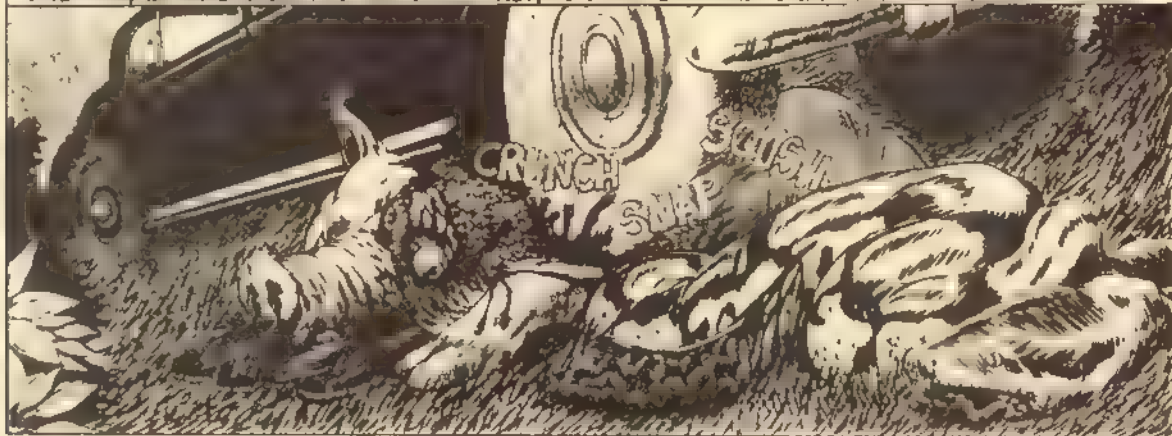
THE IMPACT DID NOTHING TO DIMINISH THE FURY OF THEIR BATTLE.



CHILDE LIMPED AS QUICKLY AS HE COULD TO THE ROLLS PARKED IN THE DRIVEWAY IT WAS UNLOCKED AND THE KEYS WERE IN THE IGNITION. HE STARTED IT AND PRESSED THE ACCELERATOR...



AND SLAMMED INTO MAG DA AND MRS GOASATCHOW HE DROVE BACK AND FORTH OVER THEM SEVERAL TIMES.



AS HE DROVE AWAY HE COULD SEE DELORES AS SHE CHANGED VIVIENNE AND THE MAIDS INTO THE WOODS



WHEN HE REACHED THE OUTER GATE HE WIPED THE ROLLS CLEAN OF HIS FINGERPRINTS AND RAN TO HIS CAR. HE'D GONE LESS THAN A MILE WHEN A BLACK CADILLAC SHOT PAST HIM HEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE ESTATE



THE SKY DARKENED, GROWLED, THUNDERED, LIGHTNINGED AND A STRONG WIND TORE THE SMOG APART. DROPS OF RAIN HIT THE WINDOW AS ANOTHER EJACULATION LETT DROPS ONTO THE DASHBOARD. THE RAIN WASHED THE AIR WITHOUT LET UP FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF.





DON'T WORRY. I'M SURE SYBIL WILL SHOW UP SAFE AND SOUND.

I WISH I COULD BELIEVE THAT MYSELF.

A pencil sketch of a jar with a label that reads "1/4 Salbe". The jar is cylindrical with a wide mouth and a flat lid. The label is rectangular and attached to the front of the jar. The drawing is done in a simple, sketchy style with some shading on the jar's body and lid. Below the jar, there are some faint, scribbled lines that might represent a surface or a shadow.

Dear Mr. Childs,

You don't know us, but we passed you on the way to Greenacres estate. It is fortunate for you that we have never met. You managed to kill permanently a number of our friends who have annoyed us for a very long time. You could not have done it if you had not the help of del. Grogan who met us on the way we did not have the beam and the others paid for their work. You have been very discreet in not telling us what you know. Keep it that way otherwise

Pl. There is a surprise waiting for you in the bedroom.

A black and white photograph of a woman lying down, looking up at a sign that reads "PINK PINK PINK". The woman is wearing a dark, patterned garment. The sign is illuminated and appears to be part of a stage set or a film set. The overall tone is artistic and somewhat surreal.





UNDERGROUND COMIX  
ARE JUST  
GOOD WHOLESOME  
FUN!.. BOYS AN GIRLS

... SO WHY NOT  
SEND AWAY FOR A  
WHOLE BUNCH MORE?

LATEST  
RELEASES  
FROM  
"LAST GASP"



HAROLD HEDD #1	1.00
HAROLD HEDD #2	.50
LEATHER NUN	.50
BAKERSFIELD COMIX	.50
AMERICAN FLYER #2	.50
IMAGE OF THE BEAST	.50
PSYCHOTIC ADVENTURE #2	.50
DOPIN DAN #3	.50
SLOW DEATH #5	.50
ETERNAL TALES	.50
DR ATOMIC #2	.50
GRIMWIT #1	.50
GRIMWIT #2	1.00
PUDGE	.50

SKULL #6	.50
ARMAGEDDON #3	1.00
WIMMENS COMIX #3	.50
ALL CANADIAN BEAVER	.50
PANDORAS BOX	.50
LITTLE GREEN DINOSAUR #2	.50
GJDRKZLXC BWQ	.50

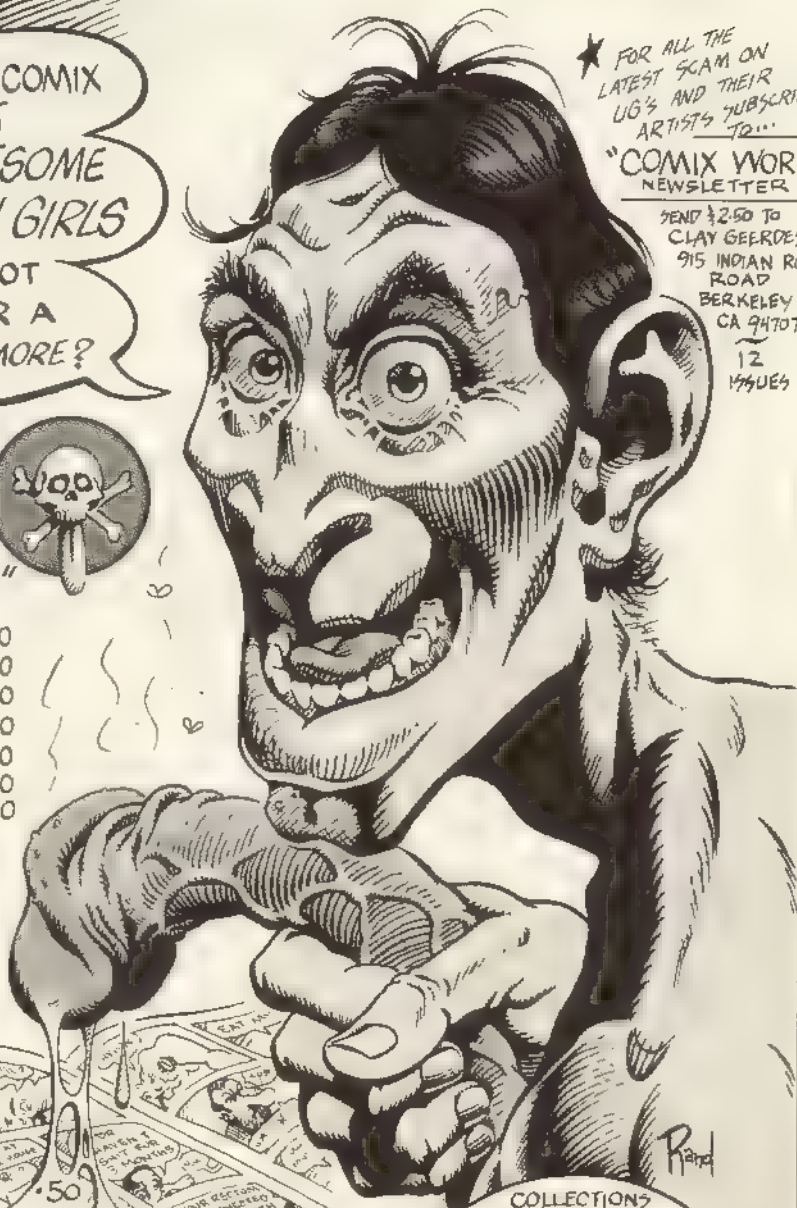
⚡ (BASIL WOLVERTON ART)

ADD 15¢ FOR POSTAGE & HANDLING

SEND TO... LAST GASP ECO-FUNNIES  
P.O. BOX 212 - BERKELEY CA. 94701

★ FOR ALL THE  
LATEST SCAM ON  
UG'S AND THEIR  
ARTISTS "SUBSCRIBE  
TO..."  
"COMIX WORLD"  
NEWSLETTER

SEND \$2.50 TO  
CLAY GEEDES  
915 INDIAN ROCK  
ROAD  
BERKELEY  
CA 94707  
12  
ISSUES

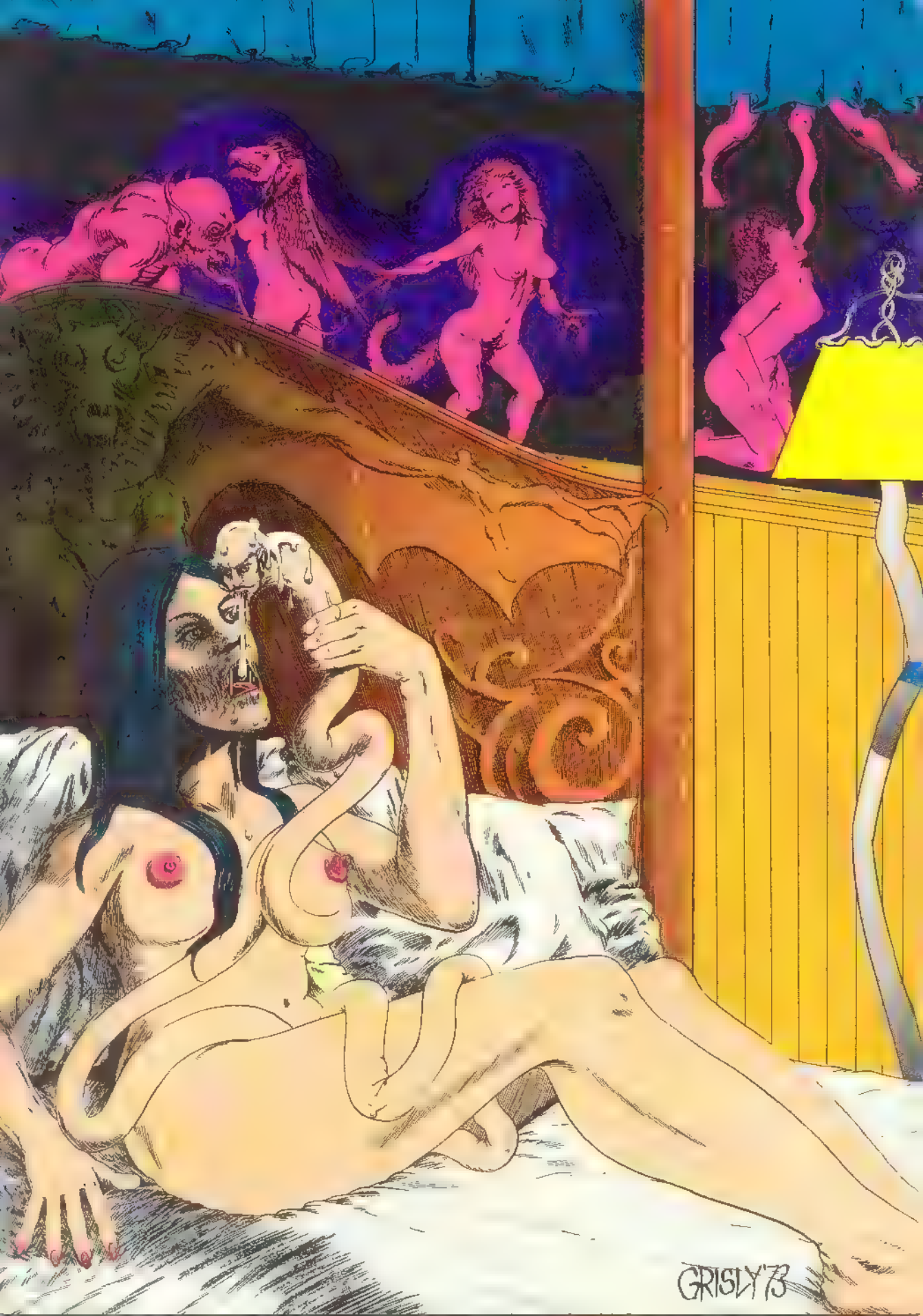


AGE STATEMENT  
MUST ACCOMPANY  
ORDER

ORDER \$30.00  
WORTH OF BOOKS  
LISTED... FOR  
ONLY \$20.00!  
POSTPAID

COLLECTIONS  
LIKE THESE WILL  
EVENTUALLY BE WORTH  
THOUSANDS





GRISLY '73



PHILIP JOSÉ FARMER'S  
**THE IMAGE OF THE  
BEAST**



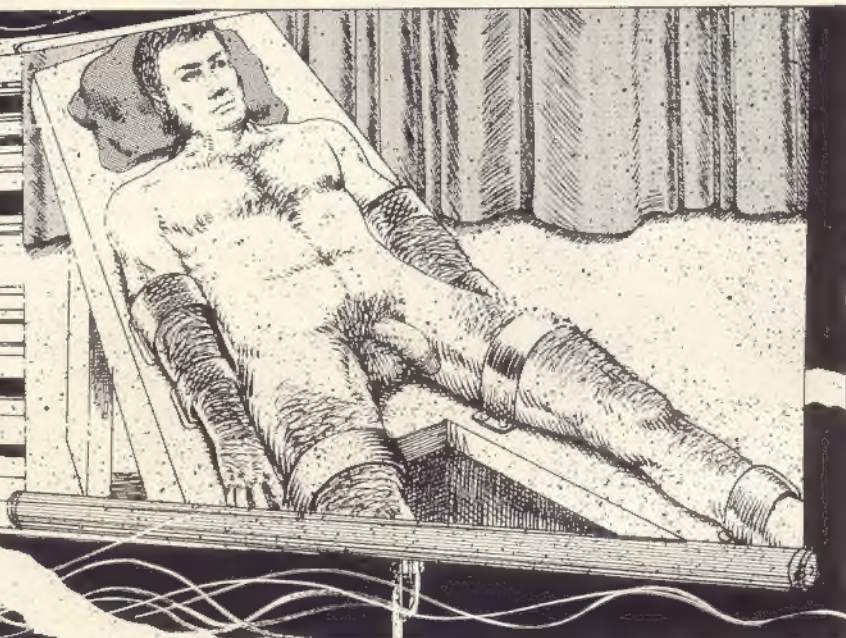


# CHAPTER ONE

GREEN MILK CURDLED. SMOG WAS OUTSIDE AND SMOG WAS INSIDE. THE FILM ROOM OF THE LOS ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT WAS DARKER THAN HERALD CHILDE HAD EVER SEEN IT. THE BEAM OF LIGHT FROM THE PROJECTION BOOTH USUALLY TENDED TO MAKE GRAY WHAT OTHERWISE WOULD HAVE BEEN BLACK. BUT THE CIGAR AND CIGARETTE SMOKE, THE SMOG AND THE MOOD OF THE VIEWERS BLACKENED EVERYTHING. THE WORST SMOG IN HISTORY WAS SMOTHERING LOS ANGELES AND ORANGE COUNTIES. NOT A MOUSE OF WIND HAD STIRRED FOR A DAY AND A NIGHT AND A DAY AND A NIGHT. BUT NOW HE COULD FORGET THE SMOG...



... FOR NOW THE BURNING IN HIS EYES AND THROAT WAS PRODUCED BY THE SIGHT OF HIS PARTNER MATTHEW COLBEN, ON THE SCREEN, BOUND TO A TABLE.





IF YOU ENJOYED  
THIS STORY BY GRISLY AND  
PHILIP JOSE FARMER...

YOU'RE WAY  
BEYOND HELP!

GRISLY/8

YOU'LL WANT TO FEED THAT SICK MIND OF YOURS  
WITH THE KIND OF STORIES AND ART THAT'LL  
MAKE IT EVEN SICKER! WE RECOMMEND THESE  
FINE BOOKS BY GRISLY, BOXELL AND OTHER BADLY  
TWISTED FOLKS! DIG IN!



GO AHEAD  
AND BUY  
COMIX  
BEFORE  
YOUR MOUTH  
WORTH EVEN  
LESS!

SLOW DEATH 8 - BOXELL, IRONS + STOUT SPECIAL GREENPEACE ISSUE \$1.

SLOW DEATH 9 - BOXELL, IRONS + MCCARTHY ATOMIC ENERGY... ITS KILLING YOU NOW! \$1.

NO DUCKS? #1 - BOXELL, LARSON, WALLER + SCHUMESTER OFFER AN  
ALTERNATIVE TO INANE AND ANNOYING FUNNY ANIMAL COMICS \$1.

FRESCA ZIZI'S - BETTER HOPE MEUNDA MADE THIS STUFF UP! INTENSE BIZARRENESS \$1.

WHITE COMMANCHE/REDRAIDER BLOOD ON THE MOON - SICK IS THE WORD FOR THE WAY THE U.S.  
HAS TREATED THE NATIVES OF AMERICA - FINE STUFF \$11. BY JAYON. each

SEND \$1.25 (25¢ POSTAGE + HANDLING) TO LAST GASP BOX 212, BERKELEY, CA 94705  
PLEASE ENCLOSE SIGNED STATEMENT OF AGE. YOU MUST BE 18 TO ORDER THESE COMIX.



